



18th Battalion Association

Windsor and Detroit Branch

MEMORIES

Do you remember Lorenzo Kress who soon became one of the best known men among those who were first stationed at Queens Park? He later became well known in the Battalion as Dutch Kress, a nickname acquired during his school days. Dutch was quite a man. Before the war, he was the star pitcher for the Galt Baseball team and when they were eliminated from the Inter-County playoffs, Dutch and his catcher, Butch Gramond both enlisted and were in our Platoon. They were direct opposites. While Dutch was loud and flamboyant, Butch or Alec as most of us called him was quiet and reserved. They were both grand fellows.

Dutch seemed to be a part of everything unusual that took place in our Platoon. He liked to tease poor old Sergt. Drake. I believe they came from the same district.

I recall one occurrence that I am sure others will still remember. There was a nice looking chap named Clarke whose cot was at the lower end of the Automobile shed where we were billeted. After we were nicely settled in Queens Park he was made an M.P. In fact, he walked around with an M.P. band on his arm while we were all in civies. When the uniforms were issued, he was still an M.P. and seemed to spend most of his time in downtown London. Some of the fellows claimed he was strict and overly officious. About the end of January or three months after we had commenced training, for some reason or other he was given his discharge. He changed into civilian clothes and left the sleeping quarters just about the time we were coming back from the Mess. He had just started across the parade grounds when Dutch and two others fell in behind him, all banging on the tops of garbage cans. If they were trying to imitate a drumming out ceremony, they were doing a fair job. The poor chap was so embarrassed, I actually felt sorry for him. Several years later, Davy Norwood told me he had met the former M.P. in France late in 1917. At that time, he was a gunner with a Canadian Battery.

Dutch was a big man and looked strong and healthy. He wasn't. Shortly after we arrived in Sandling, he had trouble with his legs which would swell up and cause him some discomfort. He attended several sick parades and the tall Corporal in Major Hale's office kept him supplied with some white pills which were supposed to reduce the swelling and ease the pain. Dutch claimed they were only aspirin and handed them out quite freely to anyone with a cold or headache. Shortly after we arrived in France, the leg condition returned and Dutch missed several trips into the front line. Dutch was with the Battalion for quite a while, but Butch, who later transferred to the Bombers was with the Battalion almost to the end. The last time I saw Dutch was at one of our early Reunions. At that time, he had lost a lot of weight and I thought he looked haggard.

Every Platoon had the odd character or two but with Dutch Kress, Bill Bartlett who wrote those tear jerking articles for the London Free Press, little Georgie Read the loneliest man in the Battalion, and Hooligan whose last name I still can't remember, we seemed to have more than our share. They were all good fellows, who made a drab army life a little more interesting.